

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

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Claim 1-26: Canceled.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): A method for operating a welding apparatus, wherein a welding torch or an electrode is fed with controlled or regulated electric power, and wherein, at least during the welding procedure, operating states are detected and transmitted to a computing unit and processed in said computing unit, whereby the detected operating states are processed according to stored specifications and compared with stored state, ~~characterized in that the detected operating states are transmitted to the computing unit via a standardized interface, and that~~ and wherein messages automatically allocated as a function of the comparative results are transmitted to

external receivers in the form of e-mails, via data networks, or in the form of short messages via mobile networks, or in the form of facsimile transmissions via telecommunication networks, or the messages are converted into acoustic signals to be transmitted to receivers via telecommunication or radio networks.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 27, wherein the messages are transmitted to allocated external receivers as a function of the comparative results.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 27, wherein the messages are transmitted to external receivers in an allocated manner as a function of the comparative results.

Claims 30-33: Canceled.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): A method according to claim 27, wherein the detected operating states are transmitted to the computing unit via ~~an OPC (object link embedding for process control)~~ a standardized interface.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 27, wherein the detected operating states are transmitted to the computing unit in the binary code.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 27, wherein the detected operating states are preprocessed prior to being transmitted to the computing unit.

Claim 37 (Currently Amended): A method according to claim 27, wherein the specifications ~~and/or~~ states are stored in the computing unit.

Claim 38 (Currently Amended): A method according to claim 27, wherein the specifications ~~and/or~~ states are stored in a database connected with the computing unit.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 27, wherein a unique identification of the welding apparatus is transmitted to the external receiver along with the messages.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): A welding apparatus including

an energy source (2), particularly a power source, preferably controlled or regulated by the aid of a control device (4), and at least one welding torch (10) or an electrode, ~~particularly a welding wire~~, and further including at least one device for the detection of operating states and at least one computing unit (29) connected with the at least one detection device and provided for the processing of said operating states, and, furthermore, at least one device (35) for the storage of specifications according to which the operating states are processed, and of states with which the processed operating states are compared, and at least one device (36) for the transmission of messages to external receivers (37), which is connected with the computing unit (29), ~~characterized in that the detection devices and optionally the control device (4) are connected with the computing unit (29) via a standardized interface, and that~~ wherein the transmission device (36) is configured for the automatic transmission to said external receivers (37), of messages allocated as a function of the comparative results, and wherein the transmission device is comprised of a computing unit including a connection to a data network, or is comprised of a mobile telephone or a facsimile transmitter or an acoustic transmitter unit.

Claims 41-44: (Canceled).

Claim 45 (Currently Amended): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the detection devices and optionally the control device (4) are connected with the computing unit (29) by ~~an OPC (object link embedding for process control)~~ a standardized interface.

Claim 46 (Previously Presented): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the computing unit (19) for the processing of operating states is integrated in the welding apparatus.

Claim 47 (Currently Amended): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein a unit (40) for the preprocessing of the detected operating states prior to their transmission to the computing unit (29) is ~~be~~ provided.

Claim 48 (Currently Amended): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein a database (35) connected with the computing unit (29) is provided for the storage of the specifications according to which operating states are processed ~~and/or~~ of the

states with which the operating states to be processed are compared.

Claim 49 (Previously Presented): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein an identification device (39) is provided.

Claim 50 (Previously Presented): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein an external receiver (37) is comprised of a welding apparatus.

Claim 51 (Previously Presented): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein at least one detection device is comprised of a temperature sensor (31).

Claim 52 (Currently Amended): A welding apparatus according to claim 40, wherein at least one detection device is comprised of a camera (33), ~~particularly a digital camera.~~